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## Signature Phrases, Azes dates, Nakṣatras and Some New Reliquary Inscriptions from Gandhara

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This paper presents some Buddhist reliquaries and artefacts, most of them unpublished. The pieces stem from various sources, and are dated, explicitly or not, in the Azes era. Only in one case is a date from the Kuṣāṇa era possible. For the dates in both eras modern equivalents are offered. The Kuṣāṇa era has been defined in two articles (Falk 2001a, 2004) with a beginning in AD 127/128. The Azes era has recently been separated from the Vikrama era and a new starting point in 48/47 BC was proposed in Falk & Bennett 2009 on the basis of the locally used intercalary cycle. Apart from the new material with its proposed dates, four particular aspects will be highlighted.

One is the question of how King Azes is referred to when his era is mentioned. The phraseology regarding him is not uniform, and different expressions might be a sign of how he was considered as a person in different areas and decades.

Another problem is the form of months used. They can, in theory, start with the new moon or with the full moon. The new material shows that in contrast to earlier expectations both types can be found.

A third problem concerns terminology: we have Indian month-names, as expected; we also find Macedonian month-names in a sort of Greek renaissance of the first century AD. Much less known are Babylonian month-names, common in Seleucid Irak, but also in use in Bactria, certainly, because mercenaries from the area of Babylonia came to work in present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan after the Seleucids succumbed to the Roman Empire.

As a fourth aspect I will deal with what I call signature phrases, i.e. short remarks of a Buddhist vein, which are unique to the respective reliquary donors – and independent of the otherwise standardized phraseology for donatory texts.

### 1. A dedicatory slab from Gunyār (Thana), Azes 74, ca. AD 26

Most reliquary inscriptions from Gandhara suffer from the uncertainty about their find-spots. Very recently, an inscribed slab [fig. 1] was shown to some specialists in electronic photographs, indicating that an accumulation of stones proved to be the remnants of a stūpa at Gunyār. This site is located at roughly 34°36' N, 72°03' E, in the hills a few km south of Thana in the Malakand Agency. There, a damaged slab was found which once was part of a stūpa foundation. In four lines we read:

- 1: *saṃvatśaraye śasatadimaye 20-20-20-10-4- ///*
- 2: *ayasa kalagadasa teśasa masa[s] ///*
- 3: */// (di)[va]saye navamaye 4-4-1 iśa ///*
- 4: */// [p](r)atiṭhaveli śa[ri] ///*

“In the year seventy-six, 74///, of the deceased (king) Azes, in the month of Taiśa, on the ninth day, 9, (at) this (date) . . . establishes the bodily relics ///

Some parts of the text are missing. On the right side, the beginning is preserved in the first line. It also seems to be present in the second line, as well as in the third. There is not much stone missing on the left side, as arises from the text of line 2 continuing into line 3, where the month continues with the day. If the text was distributed all over the slab in lines of more or less equal length, then the first line lost nothing but the part necessary for two verticals, changing 20-20-20-10-4 into the full 76 as required by the prose equivalent.

This text has little new to offer regarding vocabulary. Only the month name *teśa* is new in Gandhārī reliquary inscriptions, displaying a “wrong” sibilant. Derived from the asterism *tiṣya* it comes as *taiśa* in standard Sanskrit and should accordingly be *\*teśa* in Gāndhārī. The “wrong” sibilant can be explained when derived from a base *taiṣya*, since *ṣya* becomes *śa* also in future forms, as e.g. in *aṇumotiśati* (Senavarma 13c, Skt *anumodiṣyati*) or *bhaviśati* (Senavarma 12d, Skt *bhaviṣyati*), or in *manuśe* (Senavarma 13b) from Skt. *mānuṣyaḥ*. The derivative *taiṣya* is rather rare compared to the regular *taiśa*, but found occasionally and as early as the Āśvalāyanaśrautasūtra 8.14.7.

Alternatively, and with the same result, already the asterism *tiṣya* may have turned into *tiśa* in Gāndhārī and the month derived from it by a *taddhita*-formation using *vṛddhi* would again be *teśa*.

If the assumption of the slab's original surface is correct, the name of Azes in the date formula is not preceded by his title *mahārāja*. A look at the different date formulae including his name is telling:

1. “year # of **Azes**” is so far found in his years 39 (*ayasa*, Haḍḍa gold sheet, Sadakata 1996: 306); 73 (*ve vucati ayasa*, Yavana reliquary, Salomon 2005: 363); 134 (*ajasa*, Kalawan casket; Salomon 1998: 269); 136 (*ayasa*, Taxila silver scroll, Konow 1929: 77).
2. “year # of the **mahārāja Azes**” has not been found so far;
3. “year # of the **mahārāja Azes, the Great**” is found in his years 9 (*maharajasa mahatasa ayasa*; bronze dish on stand, Falk 2006: 395) and 98 (*maharayasa mahatasa ayasa*, replaced reliquary bowl, Sadakata 1996: 308);
4. “year # of the deceased **Azes**” was not found so far. Our stone box of the year 76 (*ayasa kalagadasa*) here is the first such case.
5. “year # of the deceased **mahārāja Azes**” is found in his years 63 (*maharayasa ayasa*

*atidasa*, Indravarman casket, Fussman 1980: 3), 77 (*maharayasa ayasa vurtakalasa*, Śatruleka casket, Falk 1998: 88); 83 (*maharajasa ayasa vurtakalasa*, “Kopśakasa” casket, Fussman 1984: 39).

6. “year # of the deceased *mahārāja Azes, the Great*” is found in his years 74 (*maharayasa mahatasa ayasa vurtakalasa*, Rāmaka slab, Fussman 1980: 6); 121 (*maharajasa mahatasa ayasa vurtakalasa*, new copper-sheet donation record, see below § 4), 126 (*maharayasa mahatasa ayasa kalagadasa*, stone cist, Fussman 1985b: 48).

7. In the very beginning and after year 136, there are a further number of texts dated in the Azes era not mentioning the king’s name at all. The initial phase lasts for about half a century and comprises the majority of those texts which mention the Apraca dynasty or can be linked to its members.

The survey seems to show that those donors who speak of him as “defunct” usually remembered him as great and mighty. Our casket here is the first case where he is “defunct” without any title mentioned.

These five attested groups seem to share some local characteristics. In type 1, neither *maharaja* nor *mahata* is mentioned in all four text, and they have their origins outside the region of Bajaur, to which the Peshawar valley can be added as Azes’ realm: Haḍḍa is in Nangahar, the Yavana casket has a formal parallel in the Kabul valley (cf. Falk forthcoming), Kalawan and Taxila are to the east of the Indus. Three of these four texts must have been written after the demise of Azes (years 73, 134, 136).

In group 3 he is not only *maharaja*, but also *mahata*, “the Great”. The bronze dish (year 9) is dated in his lifetime, whereas the substitute bowl with an older lid (Sadakata 1996: 308) certainly is posthumous. The dish most likely comes from Buner, but the bowl’s origins are unknown. Buner is part of the transit from Bajaur to the Indus.

The texts of group 5 have their origins mostly in the family of the Apraca kings, who in earlier times dated in Azes years, without referring to him, as if no other attribution was thinkable. Most of them are expected to have had their local origins in Bajaur. After Azes’ demise, however, the donors mention him always with his title, and three times they call him “the Great” as well.

The general impression arising from this survey is that Azes is given prominent titles in his family and in his core area. He is denied titles outside Bajaur, i.e. behind the Khyber Pass in the West and beyond the Indus in the East, in the Taxila region. He is called “deceased” by his family with the lowest date in the year 63 – with 39 being the last preserved number earlier than that.

When we look at the slab from Gunyār, we seem to face a “case in between”, with no title but a reference to his being dead, using a term *kālagata*, found so far only on the stone cist from year 126 of Azes (Fussman 1985b: 48). The slab presented here was part of a similar stone cist. Considering both the technical similarity and the similarity in terms a local proximity of the findplaces is highly plausible. Fussman called the origins

of his stone-cist “unknown”; because of the Gunyār parallel, the lower Swat now seems likely.

## 2. A reliquary dated Azes 139, ca. AD 91

The collection of François Mandeville in Hong Kong comprises a globular reliquary [fig. 2] which shows an inscription on its body, close to the upper rim between two of the adorning lines [fig. 3]. It can serve here as one of three new inscriptions to test the classification presented above. The fabric is simple, but the lid shows a rare flower-like bud as its handle and the lowest part of the lid has received a series of parallel undulating lines. The object is 8.5 cm wide and 7 cm high including the bud, and it seems to be the smallest inscribed globular reliquary made from stone found so far in Gandhara.

The inscription is unique in that it shows a technical particularity unknown so far: in imitation of punched inscriptions on metal vessels, this stone reliquary has received letters in dotted outline drilled with a pointed instrument. The letters are nicely shaped, very typical of the time, and I see no reason to suspect a fake. The text itself is less startling, providing a date and the era, but nothing more:

*sa 1-100-20-10-4-4-1 ayasa aṣaḍasasa diase 20-1 iṣa divasa pradiṭhāvita  
bhagavato dhatuu*

“Year 139 of Azes, on day 21 of (the month of) Āṣāḍha, at this day were installed the relics of the Lord.”

The name of the donor is missing, as is the place. With the new date of Azes in 48/47 BC, we end up in ca. AD 91.

Noteworthy is the nominative *dhatuu*, comparable only to *dhatuo* found in the Taxila silver scroll inscription (Konow 1929: 77). The repeated *sa* ending *aṣaḍasasa* may be a haplographical version of an original *aṣaḍasa masasa*.

The date formula is of type 1 above: nothing but the name of Azes, and no title given. This is the latest group, followed by the one where years are counted in the Azes era, but Azes is not mentioned any longer.

## 3. A cubical reliquary dated (Azes) 147, ca. AD 99

Usually, reliquaries are globular or cylindrical and turned round on a lathe. A few square ones are known, chiselled into a cube. One example showing a flat lid is found in Kurita (2003: 271) as no. 824. In the same work, no. 823 shows a truncated pyramidal lid and apart from a decoration on the horizontal band on the lid looks identical to another one which was shown to me by Mr. T. Kaku of Ancient Art / Taiyo Ltd., Tokyo [fig. 4]. Its width measures 16 cm; the lower part is 10.2 cm high; when the lid covers the body, the whole reliquary amounts to 18.5 cm. The material is green schist, heavily overgrown with concretions.

Inside this casket a small golden cylinder was found, one perforated crystal, beads, pearls, one or two of the usual flowers made from thin gold foil, and in addition to other coins (see below) one small stamped silver disk, hardly 3 mm in diameter [fig. 5], possibly a coin as well.

The inside of the lid shows an inscription on all four sides, extending in a lower second register over two sides. The letters are carefully incised. It reads with only one space in front of the first line (figs. 6-9):

1: *vaṣa 1-100-20-20-4-1-1-1*

2: *jēṭhasa dive caada*

3: *śe io daṇamuho bha*

4: *ṭarasa dhamavada-a*

1a: *ṭasadhaku*

2a: *laṇa<sup>1</sup>*

“Year 147, on day 14 of the month of Jyaisṭha, this is the pious donation of Bhaṭṭāra who belongs to the groups of judges (and) executors.”

The year number being above 100 excludes a Kuṣāṇa date. Starting from the new Azes date in 48/47 BC (Falk & Bennett 2009), we end around AD 99. This is perfectly in line with nine copper coins [fig. 10] found along with the casket. Of those less corroded two can be defined as of the second Kuṣāṇa king Soter megas, and at least one was issued by his father Kujula Kadphises, being of the common type showing the head of Augustus on the obverse and Heracles with club on the reverse. A third coin shows a horseman facing right on the obverse and a person with an arm stretched out to the right on the reverse. Coins fulfilling these conditions were issued by Gondophares and his relatives Abdagases and Sases; also by Aśpavarman of the Azes line and finally by the Kuṣāṇa king Vema Takhtu, alias Soter megas. Only cleaning this coin could decide the case.

The donor named Bhaṭṭāra specifies his profession. He is a member of a group (*kula*) of judges expounding the law (*dharmavāda*), wherewith profane law is certainly meant, not the clerical *dharma*. The same group also looks after *arthasādhā*, “fulfilling an aim”, possibly with regard to the verdicts made. “Execution” would be verbal, but should not be taken to refer solely to capital punishment.

The reference to king Azes is of type 5: no mention at all, typical of most of the latest cases, before the Kuṣāṇas put the older era to rest.

#### 4. A new set of dedicatory copper-plates

A few years ago a stūpa in Kohat, south of the Peshawar valley, was opened by clandestine diggers. For the first time a dedicatory text was found, not on the reliquary or on a sheet of metal inside the reliquary, but written on eight copper-plates, about 17×10 cm, which were linked to each other by small rings. If someone held up the topmost plate all the others would hang below it. The folding would have been done in a leporello fashion. This set of plates has been made known as such by Nasim Khan (2002), with tentative fragmentary readings and the figure of only the first plate. The whole set can be seen in fig.11.

Very recently a second such leporello was found. The find-place is neither Kohat

<sup>1</sup> This amounts to Skt.: *varṣe 147, jyeṣṭhasya dive caturdaśe ayaṃ dānamukho bhaṭṭārasya dharmavāda-arthasādhaka-kulānām.*

nor Bajaur. Apart from this negative evidence, nothing more accurate could be found out. The new set consists of only five plates, linked to each other in the same way [fig. 12]. I have seen photographs of the whole set, but only the first plate can be read from them. The letters are punched with a pointed instrument, without spaces [fig. 13]. The 'hand-writing' is clear and devoid of frills. The first plate reads in six lines without spaces:

1-1: *maharajasa mahatasa ayasa vurtakalasa varṣaya ekaviṣatiśadamaye*

1-100-20-1 *gu*

1-2: *rpieyasa masasa diasammi tridaśamami 10-3 utarehi proṭhavadahi nakṣetra[mi]*

1-3: *iśa kṣunami helaūte demetriaputre avivage pratiṭhaviṭi bhagavado rahado sa-*

1-4: *masabudhasa sugado logapida aṇutaro puruṣadhammasarasina śasta devamaṇuṣaṇa śa*

1-5: *kamuṇ[i]sa dhadue taṇuakami thubumi aīriaṇa dhamaūtakana śamaṇaṇa parigra*

1-6: *hami apaṇasa hidasuhadaṇe nivaṇasabharadae metreasa mosaṇadae dhami*

"In the year one hundred and twenty-one, 121, of the Mahārāja Azes, the Great, whose time has expired, on the thirteenth day, 13, of the month of Gorpiaios, (when the moon is) in the Nakṣatra of Uttara Proṣṭhapada, at this date, Helagupta, son of Demetrius, establishes at Avivaga the relics of the Lord, of the Arhat, of the Samyaksambuddha, Sugata, father of the world, the unsurpassable, of the guide of the Dharma of men, the teacher of gods and men, of the Śākyamuni, in his own stūpa, into the care of the teachers of the Dharmaguptaka monks. For the state of his own welfare and happiness, for the state of preparation of Nirvāṇa, for the state of Maitreya's liberation . . ."

Most of the text is clear and unambiguous, but some terms require a commentary:

- *gurpieya* renders the Macedonian *gorpiaios* into the local Prakrit,
- *utarehi proṭhavadahi* is unique, since the star formation called *proṣṭhapada* usually is composed of the two *nakṣatras* named *pūrvabhadrapada* and *uttarabhadrapada*. It is clear that *uttara-proṣṭhapada*- here stands for *uttarabhadrapada*.
- Being the son of a Demetrios, it is tempting to understand *helaūta* as a version of *helio-gupta*. Hybrid names of this sort are not unknown, but a derivation form *\*bhelagupta* is phonetically possible and removes a series of objections.
- *avivage* is taken as a place-name in the locative. It cannot be ruled out that *ajivage* is to be read or that something else is intended.
- The series *bhagavado rahado samasabudhasa sugado logapida aṇutaro puruṣadhammasarasina śasta devamaṇuṣaṇa śakamuṇisa (dhadue)* is clearly taken from the phrase *iti pi so bhagavā araham sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathī satthā devamanuṣānaṃ buddho bhagavā ti*, as found in the Aṅguttaranikāya and many more places in the Pali canon. In the Avadānaśataka it is

rendered in Sanskrit as: *samyaksambuddho loka udapādi vidyācaraṇasampannaḥ sugato lokavid anuttaraḥ puruṣadamyasārathih śāstā deva-manuṣānām buddho bhagavān*. A similar Gāndhārī version of the same original is already known from the Ajitasena gold foil (Fussman 1986: 2), where we read: *tasagadasa bhagavado rahado samasabudhasa śakamuṇisa śakavirajasa vijacaraṇasapaṇasa (dhadue)*. While the author of the Ajitasena plate was able to transpose all nominatives of the original phrase into the genitive, our author was not. He kept *sugato logapida anutaro* and *śasta* in the nominative. Interesting is his misunderstanding of *lokavidū*, “knowing the world”, into *logapida*, “father of the world”, understanding the *vi* as a Prakrit rendering of an original *pi*.<sup>2</sup>

– A similar blunder leads to *puruṣadhammasarasiṇa* from *purisadammasārathī* (Pali) or *puruṣadamyasārathih* (Sanskrit).

– The form *āiriana* for *ācāryānām* is already known from the stone-cist (Fussman 1985b: 48, D16), where the Mahīśāsakas are addressed. O. von Hinüber (2008: 34 fn. 14) proposed the reading *āirya ma[hā](saṅghikā)na* on the Anyor Buddha (Lüders 1961: 170f. no. 134), which would provide an identical orthography in Brāhmī within the same school, with the Gandharan pieces (ca. AD 73 and 76) clearly predating the one near Mathura (ca. AD 178 or 278).

– The wish for his own well-being, *apaṇasa hidasuhadaḥ*, has a parallel in sentence 11b of the Senavarma gold plate (von Hinüber 2003: 35f.), where we read: *sarvasatvaṇa hidasuhadae hoto*, “for the state of well-being and happiness for all beings”. Pali *hitasukhatā* is found in the Dīghanikāya (III: 154 = 27.1.18) as well as in the Suttanipāta stanza 683.

– The same applies to *ṇivāṇasabharadae*, which has a parallel in the Hidda inscription (Konow 1929: 158; 1935) where we read *sarvasatvaṇa ṇivāṇasambharae bhavatu*, “may there be the preparation for *nirvāṇa* for all people”, whereas here we have “the state of preparation for *nirvāṇa*”. A similar term is *puṇyasambhāratā* in the Gaṇḍavyūha (ed. Vaidya p. 425), “the state for the preparation of *puṇya*”.

– *metreasa mosanadae* most likely represents *maitreyasya \*moksānatāyai*, with an unusual shift from *kṣ* to *s*, which may be compared to the likewise unusual, although explicable, shift from *kṣ* to *h* in *vimoha* in the Senavarma plate sentence 5b.

The date is Gorpiaios, day 13, Azes year 121, corresponding to a day in a month starting in the latter half of August, AD 73, obviously a time when the defunct Azes, the Great was still in high esteem.

We will deal with the particulars of this date again further below.

## 5. An Apraca reliquary revisited

For many years a reliquary has been laying with a private collector in Great Britain. It is made from dark schist, 74 mm high and 8.2 cm wide. A rectangular mortise in the bottom part helped hold the piece to the lathe. When it was found inside the debris of a

<sup>2</sup> While a change *p*→*v* is frequent in Gāndhārī, the reverse process is unattested. Only *tv*→*p* is a current development.

stūpa at Samarbāgh in the Māyār Area (34°40 N, 71°52 E), between Dir and Bajaur, its lid was broken into at least 4 pieces; some flakes were missing altogether. The parts were reassembled by a specialist at the erstwhile Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin. It was described in French in the catalogue of the Lattes exhibition (Falk 2003a: 379f., 383 no. 332), with an enhanced English translation in Falk 2003b. Its fabric is very simple, however, it carries letters at three places:

- a) inside the lid in three of the coils of a spiral [fig. 14],
- b) on the lid in two lines between the segments [fig. 15],
- c) on the outside of the bowl in two lines [fig. 15].

In both editions I regarded the outside letters as modern productions. This view was wrong. After having received more information on the piece, the owner allowed me to inspect the reliquary for a longer period and it became apparent that the text from the inside continues on the outside in a unique fashion, unrecorded so far: the last words from the inside are repeated in line 2 on the outside. The text then continues above line 2 in line 1 on the lid. The last words of line 1 on the lid are again repeated in line 1 on the outside of the bowl proper and the text spirals down until it reaches the lowest part of the bowl. Most of the letters on the outside have been scratched in a preliminary fashion and have been rewritten with more force once again, a practice which was first observed on the Śātruleka casket (Falk 1998: 87f.). This way, many letter-parts have been scratched twice. On the whole, the writing on the outside looks very careless compared to the letters inside the lid – and some more years of experience were needed to cope with such a hand.

The new understanding of the whole composition shows also that the earlier interpretation of three strange letters inside the lid was off the mark. In the second curl of the inside I had read *..neyehi*, restored to *(bhagi)neyehi*. The letter *ye* would have come in an unusual form. I now see a *ha*, again in a slightly distorted form, but easier to understand. Where I read *hi*, I now propose to read *sto*; *hi* and *stra* are homomorphous in many hands; the tiny *o*-stroke definitely is there, whereas the lower horizontal – integral part of a *ha* and the *-ra* in *stra* – is only a flaw in the stone. Since these letters must be part of the date formula, *ne hasto* can only refer to the *nakṣatra hasta*, roughly identical to the constellation Corvus near Virgo. As an abbreviation comparable to *di* for *divase* or *saṃ* for *saṃvatsare*, we can explain *ne* for Sanskrit *nakṣatra* through the form *nekṣetra* as found on the Rāmaka casket (Fussman 1980: 5-7), with respect to which the *nakṣetra* with only one *e* read above on the copper-plate in line 1-2 marks an intermediate state.

The last part of the date formula is affected by the breaks and in addition slightly covered by some natural accretions. The first coil of the spiral can be read without any difficulty; the second coil lost 3 letters in the break; the letters of the third coil are faintly visible, but clear enough not to be mistaken – apart from the last letter, which is clearly incised but incomprehensible to me [fig. 14]:

A1: *vaṣae 20-20-[10 or 20] kartiasa masasa divasae 20-4 viyamitrassa ava-*

A2: *cara[ja/ya](sa \*raja)[m](i) ne hasto iśa divasami*

A3: *nagaṇada [ x ]*

“In the year 50 (or 60), on the 24th day of the month of Kārttika, (during the reign of) the Apraca-king Vijayamitra, (when the moon was in) the Nakṣatra Hasta, at this day Nāgānandā . . . ”

The text on the outside is not fully legible, since the breaks obliterate several letters. This is particularly regrettable for the name of the founder. On the lid we read from bottom to top [fig. 15], first the lower line which repeats the last words from inside, then the line on top of it:

B2: *īśa divasami ṇaa[ṇa]da ta[ra]vīasa meriakha[sa bha]ya*

B1: *thobo paḍiṭhapeti jalo?[ x ]mi mahata[vi?]*

“at this day Nāgānandā, the wife of the Meridarchēs Tārapriya(?), established this stūpa at Jalo?[x], (thinking) ‘mahatavi. . .’

On the cup we read in two rounds, from top to bottom, again repeating the concluding letters from the last section:

C1: *mahatavipraheṇasa śarira paḍiṭhavima*

C2: *sababudha puyaita dhamagutina saga [dana?]*

“[Thinking] ‘The relics of him, who has given up his high position, do we establish’. All Buddhas are honoured. (This is) a donation to the Saṅgha of the Dharmaguptins.”

The name of king Vijayamitra appears here as *viyamitra*, most similar to *viyemitro* on the Kharahostes silver goblet (Salomon 1996: 428a), contracted from *viyayamitro*, as found on the Indravarma casket (Falk 1998: 101), which itself was wrongly re-sanskritized into *viyakamitra*, as found on the famous Bajaur casket (Falk 2005: 353).

The active verb *paḍiṭhapeti* presupposes one or more donors in the nominative. The first name occurs twice, first in line A3 inside the lid, and again in line B2. Unfortunately, in both cases the grooves are very shallow and show many disturbances. Combining the lines in both cases, we must read *ṇagaṇaḍa* in the lid and *ṇaṇaḍa* outside; both are legal representatives of Skt. Nāgānandā or Nāganandā, a name compounded with common parts, however, as a compound not attested elsewhere in our early centuries. I opt for the feminine because of the uniform ending *-a* in both occurrences. In addition the lady seems to introduce herself as “the wife of the meridarchēs”, *meriakha[sa bha]ya*.

The name of her husband is unclear only for the second letter. This could be *ra* or *śa*, or finally *ja*, only if the prolongation of the vertical was scratched intentionally. With regard to *-via* for *-priya*, we can point to the variant *avacarāja*, derived from the more common *apracarāja*. A Skt. equivalent *\*tārapriya* is proposed; however, other solutions should not be excluded.

The high Macedonian title of *meridárkhēs* denotes a sort of governor, exercising partial power in the realm of the sovereign. This title is attested as *meriakha* for a man called Sacaka in the Senavarma inscription, or as *meriḍakha* (Konow 1929: 5, name lost) and *meridarkha* (Konow 1929: 4) for a Greek named *theudora*. Most interesting is the reference to lady Śreṣṭhā, being the mother of an unnamed *meriakha* in an undated

reliquary inscription from the Apraca princess Uttarā, mentioning Vijayamitra and Vaga, the *stratega* (Salomon 1997: 188b). Because Vaga seems to be missing from later Apraca inscriptions, this Uttarā inscription could chronologically stand rather close to our text, in such a way that Śreṣṭhā could be the mother of our governor.

The place-name seems to start with *jalo*, ending in another letter which is destroyed beyond recovery. Any relation to the modern name of the place is not apparent.

The most interesting feature of this text is the epiteton used for the Buddha. Instead of one of the simple phrases like *budha-sa śarira* or *śakamuni-sa śarira*, the two ladies install the relics (*śarira*) of the Buddha termed *mahatavipraheṇa-sa*. The reading is plain for the first 5 letters. The *he* is very angular. The *ṇa* could be *da* in other hands, but our scribe uses the unambiguous *ḍa* where ever plain *da* is expected.

Skt. *viprahīṇa*, “deprived of, rid of”, is very often used in an idealistic way for someone trying to “rid [himself] of” bad habits or attachments to worldly phenomena, in the epics as well as in Buddhist Sanskrit literature. Accordingly, our *mahatavipraheṇa* could be divided into *mahata-vipraheṇa*, equivalent to Skt. *mahattā-* or *mahatva-viprahīṇa*, and we have to look for a negative connotation for *mahattā* / *mahatva*, which, in the meaning of “high rank or position”, is said to be given up in the Satvārādhana-gāthā 5: *dārāḥ sutās ca vibhavaś ca mahatva-rājyaṃ (. . .) mayojjhītāni*, (Lévi 1929: 264 [x+3]).<sup>3</sup> When considering the elevated position of the donatrice we understand that for her “giving up high rank” meant something very substantial. On the Buddha’s side, his long-drawn earlobes deprived of their former heavy golden ornaments are ample testimony of his former social environment, visible to all wherever he was depicted in art.

The term *viprahīṇa* is also used for the Buddha in the Senavarma inscription, sentence 5a, where he is called *sarvasa jhaṇa-anuśaśa-mala-khila-aṃgaṇa-gratha-vipra hiṇasa*, “der in jeder Hinsicht durch Meditation frei ist von den Knoten, nämlich schlechter Neigung, Schmutz, Makel, Beschmutzung” (von Hinüber 2003: 22).

The phrase ends with a verb *paḍiṭṭhavima*, “we establish”, indicating donors in the plural. Similar verb-forms are *stapayema*, “we have installed” and *cayema*, “we raise”, found on the Charsadda casket of the year 303, i.e. around AD 118 (Konow 1948; for a new translation cf. Falk 2008a: 205), referring to two donors. Whether the lady refers to herself in an honorific plural or if she included her husband we are unable to say.

The final phrases honor “all the Buddhas” and donate the foundation to the Dharmaguptaka branch. The form *dhamagutiṇa* for the genitive plural instead of *dhamagutakana* or similar is unattested so far, but not startling. Other donations to this school are listed in v. Hinüber 2008: 34. Phonetically, the closest relative in Gandhāra is found on a water pot, reading *dhamauṭeana* (Sadakata 1996: 312 oder 22; Salomon 1999: 214). The development seems obvious: *dharmaguptakana* leads to *dharmagupteana*, since *aka* rather often leads – via *aya* – to *ea* (Falk 2001b: 310; 2003b: 77), and finally becomes

<sup>3</sup> *mahata* here should not be confused with *mahatva* as found on panel of the six Buddhas at the Peshawar Museum, which stands for *mahātman*, with a common change from *tma* to *tva*. For an uncommented edition cf. Falk 2008b: 270.

*dharmagutina*, dissolving the *a* and substituting *i* for *e*.<sup>4</sup>

The concluding letters *saga dana* are squeezed into the last remaining space. This explains the rudimentary form, where *\*samghasa danam* was to be expected.

This text includes one more *nakṣatra*, and in addition it used a unique epithet for the Buddha. Found only here is the text *mahatavipraheṇasa śarira paḍiṭhavima*, Skt. *mahattāvīprahīṇasya śarīraṃ pratisthāpayāmaḥ*, clearly of a metrical form, displaying, at least in the Gāndhārī, all features of a standard śloka. This phrase could have been taken from a literary text; however, it looks more like a private *ad hoc* composition brought about for the occasion. I propose to call such personal additions to a standard donation text “signature phrases”, expressive of the very personal feelings of the donors. Two more examples will be presented below.

Finding metrical forms inside a donatory text is not surprising. The whole text in early Brāhmī on the Piprahwa casket from the Nepalese border comes in sort of Āryā (Thomas 1906), and in addition Fleet (1906: 714) has shown that something similar applies to the Taxila vase (Konow 1929: 87), written in Kharoṣṭhī.

### 5.1 Date problems: *āmānta* or *pūrṇimānta*?

The precise beginning of the Azes era depends, apart from on the starting year, also on the definition of the months used. Beginnings corresponding to full moon are known in South Asia, as are beginnings with the new moon. For the starting point of an era this amounts to a difference of 14 or 15 days. Konow (1929: lxxxix) devoted some lines to this question. He was told by H. Jacobi that a day 20 of Āśāḍha under a *nakṣatra* Uttaraphalgunī is only possible in a *pūrṇimānta* system, where the full-moon day is the first day of the month. This date was found in the Zeda inscription, dated year 11 in the second century of the Kuṣāṇas, that means *ca.* AD 238 (Falk 2009a: 26f.). Being far removed in time this Kuṣāṇa date must not be representative of the conditions prevalent during the time when the Azes era was used. Nonetheless, Konow (1929: lxxxix f.) concluded that there was a “fusion of Greek and Indian notions”, with Macedonian and Indian month names side by side, non-observance of the Indian way of counting in half-months (*pakṣa*), and he could have added, the Indian principle of months starting with the full-moon. Salomon (1998: 182), who considers the Azes era as identical to *vikrama samvat*, shows that the latter era at least can have two different year beginnings, in spring or autumn, and two month beginnings with full and new moon. These inconsistencies are innate to *vikrama samvat* over a long period of time, much beyond the age we are concerned with and much beyond our geographical region.

If we disregard *vikrama samvat* dates completely and restrict ourselves to definite or certain Azes dates alone, then we now have more material for evaluation compared to Konow in 1929. Will this change the picture?

<sup>4</sup> A form *dharm[m]aguptikānam* is given in Satya Shrava 1993: 61 no. 68, read this way by Pushpa Thakurai, and similar to our *dhamagutina*; however, own inspection of the stone showed that *(dha)rmaguptakanam* must be read.

### 5.1.1 Some months are *āmānta*

The full reading of the above reliquary text presents clear facts: in case where the moon stands in *hasta* on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Kārttika, this month can only start with the new-moon, the system being *āmānta*. In a *pūrṇimānta* system, the moon on the 24<sup>th</sup> stands in Aries or Pisces, 180° apart. This seems to be a first definite piece of evidence for the system behind time reckoning in the Azes era.

Provided the Azes era started in 47 BC as “year 1 current”, then year 50 starts in spring AD 3. In this year the new moon of Kārttika took place on October 14<sup>th</sup>; The full moon near the Pleiades (*kṛttikā*) occurred on October 28; the moon stands in *hasta*, i.e. Virgo/Corvus, on November 8<sup>th</sup>, i.e. 11 days after the full moon and 25 days after the new moon. Our date states “day 24”, one day earlier than expected, but only if the new moon defined the beginning of the month. It is impossible to reconstruct an era on the basis of *nakṣatra* dates in Hindu months. However, it is safe to say that day 24 of Kārttika in an *āmānta*-system finds the moon near Corvus, or Hasta, as required, making our interpretation of *ne hasta* difficult to replace.

With the usual variations these mechanics are the same for every year in that period, in such a way that the *nakṣatra* cannot decide if 50 or 60 is the original reading.

As a second case we can refer to the new copper-plate date given above in § 4, i.e. Gorpaios, day 13, Azes year 121. This corresponds to a day in a month starting in the latter half of August, AD 74. Most welcome is the precise definition of the *nakṣatra*, given as *uttaraprosṭhapada*. This constellation is adjoining *pisces*. In AD 74, the full moon was on August 25<sup>th</sup>, standing precisely in *pisces*. If day 13 finds the moon close to the place where the full moon takes place, then the month must have started with the new moon.

### 5.1.2 Some months are *pūrṇimānta*

A different case is found in the slab of Rāmaka, published by G. Fussmann in 1980. It is dated year 74 Azes, in the month of *āspaiśu*, day 3, *nakṣatra* Aśvayuj (*āspai*). Fussman took his reading *āspaiśu* to be identical to *āśvayuj*, noting the phonetic difficulties (1980: 18), and expecting an original and miscopied *āspaiu*. If this identification were correct, the full moon would be in the *nakṣatra* *āśvina* at the beginning of the month and the progressing moon would three days later still occupy the same *nakṣatra*. Somehow, this is unlikely. But the reading is different, being *āspaivada*, where *va* and *da* are so close together as to look like a *śa*. The term as such is singular and the temptation to take it as something akin to *āśvayuj* is great. If we start at the end of the strange term, we can only link it to *bhādrapada* or *proṣṭhapada*, which in fact precede *nakṣatra* *āśvina* by two or three days, depending on where we presuppose a *pūrva* or *uttara*. This means that either the scribe made a mistake intending to write *\*bhadravada* or, much less likely, a term spelled *āspaivada* existed in Gāndhārī, synonymous to *pūrva-* or *uttara-bhādrapada* or *proṣṭhapada*.

This way we have a clear beginning with the full moon.

We have referred above to the Zeda inscription where day 20 of Āṣāḍha under a

*nakṣatra* Uttaraphalgunī can only arise in a *pūrṇimānta* system. A third example is the so-called Uṇḍ inscription (Konow 1929: 170 no. 87) of a year 61, where day 8 in the month of Caitra in fact shows the half-moon in the *Pūrvāṣāḍha nakṣatra* (around Sagittarius), if the month starts with the full moon in *nakṣatra* Citrā.

### 5.1.3 Reasons for *āmānta* and *pūrṇimānta*

In contrast to Konow's description we already have two systems at an early stage. This embarrassing mixture of two month forms in the North-West demands an explanation, but apart from the Zeda inscription, the time frame is the same, with Azes being mentioned once in both groups, both also contain numbers above 15. We can only guess that a month according to the *āmānta* system is fully in accordance with western habits, be they Macedonian or Arsacid, and accords well with the origins of the Azes era as exemplified in Falk & Bennett 2009. The Indian *nakṣatra* system, however, by naming months after the place of the full moon, has the great advantage of the night-sky providing a legible picture of the position of the moon for everyone, whereas a beginning corresponding to the new moon demands alert observers at dawn or dusk. So it seems that the Azes era originally followed the Western example, which was soon diluted by the much older and much simpler indigenous one.

## 6. Another signature phrase: The “Traṣaka”-reliquary revisited

### 6.1 The inscription inside the reliquary

Kharoṣṭhī-epigraphy has seen so many new insights over the last 30 years or so. Many first editions disclose some of their dark contents when seen with present-day knowledge. One such case is the text found on the outside and inside of a globular reliquary edited by G. Fussman (1985a), one of the most successful scholars in the field. There, we have one date written as *saṃvatsaraye śapaṃcaīśaśadama*, “in the year one hundred fifty-six”, with a month date of *masa ire d(i)asa 20-3<sup>5</sup>*, which I explained in Falk & Bennett (2009: 199f.) as the Babylonian “month [of] Aira<sup>6</sup>, day 23”. There are several Babylonian month-names found in this area. Sims-Williams & de Blois have presented a series from Bactria in their seminal paper from 1996: there is αιοαβο, equal to the Babylonian *siwānu* (1996: 153, 158; Aramaic *siwan*), αββο for the month of *abu* (160; Aramaic *ab*), and possibly παβato for *šabātu* (165). The Babylonian month of *ulūlu* (Aramaic *elul*), spelled *ulo* in Kharoṣṭhī, is found in an Aramaic text from Laghman already at the time of Aśoka (cf. Falk 2006: 249) and in two more later Gandharan Buddhist dedicatory inscriptions (Falk 2003b: 72f.; 2006: 408 fn. 39). The month of *nisānu* (Aramaic *nisan*) is used in Northern Afghanistan in Kushan times as late as AD 158 (Gershevitch 1979: 64; Davary 1982: 236). The month of *aira* (Aramaic *īyyar*) is new in the Gandharan collection of Babylonian month-names but answers the requirements of Kharoṣṭhī *ira*

<sup>5</sup> Fussman reads 20-1-1-1-1 = 24; however, this would have been expressed by 20-4. The last vertical, taken as the last 1 by Fussman, is not a straight line as the preceding three, but either a text divider or another letter.

<sup>6</sup> Fussman expects a Macedonian month-name and sees a vague resemblance to “mois d’Heraion”.

better than the month of Heraion, proposed by Fussman, which as he saw is not Macedonian at all. The mixture of simultaneously used month-names in Bactria even offers  $\chi\alpha\nu\delta\iota\gamma\omicron$  and  $\chi\alpha\nu\delta\delta\iota\gamma\omicron$ , i.e. the Macedonian month of Xandikos as late as AD 620 and 639 (Sims-Williams & de Blois 1996: 150, 152).<sup>7</sup> One more Babylonian month will be met with below in § 8.

The text coming with this date is found on the outside, on the lid of the reliquary. Fussman has clearly seen that there are different texts on the same object. The second text on the inside shows parts of a second date occurring in Macedonian terms, reading *gupriya yambulima masa saste 4-4*, “intercalary month of Gorpaïos, day 8”. Gorpaïos is not identical to either Aira or Heraion. The text preceding this month date was read as *duasya [s]atrieṇa trama*, which made little sense. This text starts with *ime bhagavato śarira*, “These relics of the Lord”. The *bha* of *bhagavato* shows in all desirable clarity that a first text was sketched in shallow lines, whereas the final scratching was done by someone else who mistook the right arm of the *bha* and scratched a very prominent *śa* on top of the *bha*. The first hand continues with *praṭiṭhapita*. Most important for our reading is the fact that this hand crosses the *ti* horizontally for the *i*-vowel, unlike all other scribes, who would have crossed the upper horizontal line vertically. With this habit in mind I have re-read the alleged *duasya [s]atrieṇa trama*, which now reads as *dua-sataṭi-śadama*, “(in the year) one hundred and seventy-two” [fig. 16], once we realize that the *śa* was scratched as two separate angular strokes, looking like *e+ṇa* and taken as such by Fussman. The first number has a parallel in *dua-triśaye*, “in the thirty-second”, as found on the Prahodi reliquary (Sadakata 1996: 303; Baums 2006: 36)

This year number, *dua-sataṭi-śadama*, is very close in form to the number on the outside, *śa-paṃcaiśa-śadama*, “one hundred and fifty-six”, the two being the only cases where *-śadama* is written instead of *-śatima* (cf. Baums 2006: 35), in such a way that we can expect both texts to be not far removed from each other in time. There are two eras which would lend themselves to furnishing a starting point. The *yavana*-era was once linked to 186/85 BC by Salomon (2005: 364ff.); according to Falk & Bennett 2009: 209 it should rather be taken as starting in 175/74 BC. This would produce dates around 19 BC and 3 BC for the two inscriptions. The other one is the Azes era starting in 48/47 BC, producing dates of AD 109 and 125 respectively. Fussman had scruples against a late date for the reliquary, understandably, but not bindingly.

A look at the letters seems to show first that *apra* must be read instead of *apa*. Secondly, what was taken to be *bru* by Fussman should be seen as a rather regular *kha*, with a footmark added as an afterthought. The lower protrusions need not mean anything in this hand, as this writer loves to ornate almost every letter with a right-pointing footmark. Taken together we can read *aprakhakasa heliupilaputrasa*.

The complete second inscription on this reliquary reads and translates according to Falk & Bennett 2009: 202:

<sup>7</sup> This equation was pointed out by Chris Bennett in a private communication; Sims-Williams at that time (1996: 152b) provided Sogdian and Choresmian parallels without trying to explain its name.

1: *ime bhagavato śarira pratīḥapita sava-budhana puyae aprakhakasa(?) heliuphila-putrasa*

2: *dua-sataṭi-śadama gurpiya yambulima maṣa saste 4-4*

“These relics of the Lord are (deposited) in veneration of all the Buddhas for Aprakhaka, son of Heliophilos. (Year) one hundred and seventy-two, intercalary month of Gorpiaios, on day 8.”

It seems important to note the short interval between the two deposit dates, Azes 156 and 172, *i.e. ca.* AD 109 and 125. There must have been a reason for opening the *stūpa* and rededicating the deposit. Two reasons have literary support, a) destruction by lightning and subsequent repair and b) enlargement for religious reasons. The famous Senavarma inscription of the Oḍirājas combines both reasons, destruction and enlargement (v. Hinüber 2003: 15ff. ).

## 6.2 The inscription outside

There is little to add to Fussman’s reading. The year number itself was amended by Salomon, who for good reasons related it to the Azes era, allegedly *vikrama samvat*, with an absolute date of *ca.* AD 100.

A few more remarks are possible:

– The numbers of the days are 20-1-1-1-1, “24”, in Fussman’s reading. This is strange given that “4” would be expressed by a cross looking like X. The last vertical of the alleged 1-1-1-1 looks rather wavy in its lower part, being followed by the personal name *traṣaka*. The same wavy letter precedes *traṣaka* in the second instance, where Fussman reads *mumjisa traṣakaputra* and I propose to read *satraṣaka* in both cases, with some reserve due to the not too clear plates, and also, because a *sa* in other cases is very traditionally outlined in this text. We could also consider taking it to be a *na* or *da*.

Allegedly, (Sa?)*traṣaka* is the son of Hiphua. Between *phu* and the *a* a long vertical is drawn, which obviously is of no importance for the letters. However, the *phu* is a *rma* and the resulting personal name *hirmaa* can be compared to the nominative *hirmae* as found in Aī Khanum (Rapin 1992: 99), and on a gold sheet, undeservedly labelled a fake by some, where we read *hirmae* twice in line 6 (Sadakata 1996: 306). This is plain Greek Hermaios, a name also known from the coins of a king of western Gandhara, who spells his name *heramaṣa* in most cases.

The last words of this text on the outside were read by Fussman as *budhana kosi pravunama niaspi ho*, with a tentative translation as “Obtenons (l’Éveil??) des Bouddhas . . .”, disregarding the last four letters. First, instead of *kosi* we should read *bhosi*. Such angular upper parts of a *bha* are not unknown, the closest parallel is found in the Sui Vihar copper plate, Konow 1929: 138-41 pl. XXVI in the middle of the second line. This *bhosi* is a distorted form of *bodhi*, often spelled *bosi*, with transplaced aspiration, comparable to *avisabhujati*, Skt. *abhisambudhyate*, used several times in a Mahāyāna text from Bajaur (CKM #265).

*pravunama* is linked by Fussman (1985a: 40) to *prāpnoti*, “to obtain”, on the basis of Pali *pāpuṇāti*. After this verbal form, the concluding letters start with a *na*, which is

incised over a fainter and much shorter sketched *na* with a footmark pointing right, the latter of which was taken by Fussman to be an *i*-stroke. The last letters are *agho duho*, with a clear *a*, followed by a *gho* where the upper round portion is somewhat angular on the left side. The *du* is clear in its upper part, the lower part with the *u*-curve is less pronounced. For the *h* in *duho* compare *hitasuhārtha*, Skt. *hitasukhārtha*, on the perfume box misnamed “Kaṇiṣka reliquary”.

Taking all this together I read another “signature formula”: *budhaṇa bhoṣi pravuṇama na agho duho*, Skt. *\*buddhānām bodhim prāpnumaḥ, na\_āghaṃ duḥkham*, “we achieve the enlightenment of the Buddhas, not the painful suffering.” For the last two words cf. *Samyuttanikāya* I 22 (= 1.4.3) *chandaḥaṃ aghaṃ; chandaḥaṃ dukkham*.

### 7. Yet another signature phrase: The “Kopśakasa”-reliquary revisited

One of the most difficult texts was published by G. Fussman in 1984 (38-46). The reliquary is of the pill-box type, inscribed on top of the lid and on the underside. The quality of the scratched letters varies from legible to very strange. The first part was read successfully as saying that it was part of a donation in the year Azes 83 by someone in *aṭhayi gramami*, where no Buddhist foundation has been before. The second side then describes the nature of the relic, “perfumed” with all sorts of excellences, as elucidated by Fussman. Then comes a text which Fussman transcribed as follows:

*aṃtra? ca aparimaṇa-dadu KhA? PA? mo iDA logo ce? vaṃsaṇa pratramo ido  
rasadhe? kopśakase? maharIja / tu? dadhuve pratiṭheveti tramane*

translated as: “(. . .) ces reliques sont (données?). Et à l’intérieur (?), ce don (?) incommensurable. . . les gens ici-bas (?) le roi (?) Kopśakasa. Ces reliques, Tramana (?), les dépose.”

Capital letters in the text and question marks in the translation both are meant to express doubts regarding the reading and the translation. Some of the uncertainties can be removed when we read the text anew:

- 4: (. . .) *to dhātuve niṣehite*
- 5: *ava ca aparimaṇada dukhadamo idra*
- 6: *logo ca vaṃsaṇa pratramo idro*
- 7: *tasa c ekodhikasa mahadhajasa*
- 8: *dhātuve pratiṭheveti*
- 9: *tramane*

saying: “These relics are furnished with unsurpassed perfection. The self is the unmeasurably greatest pain. The world of Indra is the best of (all) places to live. The relics of him who is upheld by Indra (*indrota*), who is superior by one, who has a large banner, does (the donor) install. At Tramana.”

The readings are mostly clear, but some interpretations can be questioned. *niṣehite* can be seen in the light of *ṣeho* in the Khotan-Dhammapada (Brough 1962: 92), equal to Skt. *śreyas*. From the thematic form *śreyasa* a secondary *niḥśreyasa* is derived. If we apply the same changes to *ṣeho* we will get *niṣeho*, “unsurpassed perfection”. With an *ita*-suffix expressing possession we can apply this to anything, relics included.

In the following sentence I take *atva* as Skt. *ātman*, with no formal difficulties. The relationship between *ātman* and *duḥkha* is well-known and expressed *i.a.* in *ātmānam aparitṛajya duḥkham tyaktum na śakyate* (Bodhicaryāvatāra 8,135; Guṇa-kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra p. 105), “Without abandoning the Self completely, suffering cannot be abandoned.” The sentence has to be compared to the promise of the Bodhisattva in the Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā 1 (p. 14), *mayāite sarvasattvāḥ parimocayitavyā aparimānato duḥkhaskandhāt*, “I have to liberate all beings from the immeasurably painful aggregate,” and also to a statement in the Dharmasamuccaya, introducing stanza 75: *rāgavaśagataḥ sadā duḥkhatamam anubhavati*, “Who acts under the influence of emotion always experiences the highest pain.”

In the next sentence I ignore the *anusvāra*-like bend below *va* in *vasaṇa* and take it to be Skt. *vāsānām*.

In the last of the three sentences, the enclitic *ca* presupposes *indrota-* as a compound. *ekodhika-* I take to be *ekādhika-*, possibly a writing mistake,<sup>8</sup> possibly expressing something like “slightly but always superior”. The last term suffers from one apparently distorted letter. Fussman took it to be a ‘rI’, for to propose *maharaja*. Rather than being a *ra* it could be a *ta*, producing *mahata-ja*, hypothetically “born from/with might”, reminiscent of *mahata-viprahīna*, met with above. Graphically as well as semantically the easiest solution is a *dha*, resulting in *mahadhaja*, Skt. *mahādhvaja*, “having a large flag”. This reading would have a parallel in the Mahāvastu (III: 230), where the *indrādhvajo* (...) *samyaksambuddho* changes himself into a *mahādhvajam* (...) *samyaksambuddham*, at the beginning of an endless series of similar modifications.

*tramaṇe* seems to refer to some area or district, while the place itself occurs on side 1 as *aṭhayi gramami*. While Fussman considered *tramaṇa* to be a personal name (with question-mark), Salomon (2007: 272) produced five similarly looking terms, some of them toponyms without doubt. Two of them (Traśaka: *\*trama* → [śa]dama, s. above § 6.1; Asoraya: *\*tramadhiṭhaṇa* → *samadhiṭhaṇa*) are here and elsewhere (Falk 2009b: 559) put into question, but three remain as certain, of which two show an extension (Uttarā: *tramaṇo-spa-mi*; Duplicatate inscription: [ta]maṇo-sa-mi), which was compared in Falk (2003b: 73) *i.a.* to *gaṃdhara-śpa-mi*, as found on the Satrulekha casket. The reading here stands beyond doubt; the region as such cannot be verified. Its name may refer to a copper (*tāmra*) yielding area.

To Indra in the Buddhist cosmos I will return on another occasion when dealing with a set of metal artefacts from Swat. In our context we notice a certain importance given to Indra, a god well-known in Gandhāra, if we rely on plastic art and onomastics. People understood that Indra provides a “world”, as he presides in heaven as a king. To this notion the author refers. Then comes his trick: he links this well-known deity to the Buddha as his supporter (*indrota*), while the Buddha is depicted as slightly superior (*ek[o]dhika*). Whoever places hope in Indra can now also believe in the Śākyamuni.

<sup>8</sup> Alternatively, we could construct an *eka-uddhi*, “having the only seat in the car”, i.e. “being the only driver”; however, *uddhi* “seat” is not attested outside Vedic literature.

## 8. A panel from Kham Zarkar, dated (Kuṣāṇa) 74, ca. AD 201

At Kham Zarkar, north of Kabul, close to Begram, one more panel of a “pensive Buddha” was found [fig. 17], of a type with already three close parallels, two in the Japanese art market, and one in Torino (A.M. Quagliotti in Freschi 2000: 48). This one is the first of them to be inscribed. The panel as such will be presented and discussed in a forthcoming publication of Katsumi Tanabe. Here, only the dedicatory text will be presented. It reads on a tier in the lower register on two sides [fig. 18ab]:

*sevetsara catusatatimi 20-20-20-10-4*

*dudha 1 zanatram(mi) budhadevasa vira daṇamukhe*

“In the year seventy-four, 74, (in the month of) Du’zu, (on day) 1, at Zanatra, (this) Vīra (was) the pious donation of Buddhadeva.”

Only few words need a commentary. *sevetsara* clearly stands for *saṃvatsare*. The *-e-mātrās* on *se* and *ve* are too clear to be mistaken. In particular the *va* has been made shorter than usual to provide space for the *-e*-stroke. This should be traced back to an exemplar where a supervisor intended to add a forgotten *-e* on the *ra*, but instead placed it on the *va*. The meaning as such is not affected by the misspelling.

Zanatra I take as the place-name, modern Kham Zarkar, probably without any phonetic relationship between past and present. Where I substitute a locative ending *-mi*, a portion of the stone has flaked off. As here in *tram*, an *anusvāra* often precedes such a *-mi*.

The most irritating term is *dudha*, which I take to be the Babylonian month-name Du’zu, fourth after Nissan in spring. We need a month after the year number, and we need a day number. I see no possibility to identify *dudha* as an Indian month-name. In the Macedonian system, in good use in the area as shown above, only the initial *du* could provide an alternative with the month of Dystros, fifth after Dios in spring; however, month-names are usually not abbreviated and, what is more important, in the names of Indo-Greek kings, Greek *υ* is rendered in Gāndhārī by *i* (Amyntas, *amita*; Dionysios, *dianisia*; Lysias, *lisia*) or *a* (Polyxen, *palasiṇa*, *palaksiṇa*)<sup>9</sup>, but never by *u*. Thirdly, a ‘Macedonian’ solution would force us to read the *dha* as 20, which is possible in other hands, but on our panel we have lots of 20s in the year part, and a definite *dha* in *budhadeva*; the shapes are so clearly separate that departing from *dha* would be more difficult than preserving it.

Babylonian month-names as such are not surprising, as we have seen above. Gandharan *dudha* would drop the closing *-u* from its Babylonian prototype, as does *ira* derived from Airu, and it would retain Babylonian *z* by an identical sound, written *dha*, *sa* or *sa*, all used in Kharoṣṭhī to represent the voiced sibilant found in non-Indic idioms.

New as well is the term *vīra* for the Buddha, amply attested in the Pali and

<sup>9</sup> *ksa* is not usually found in Kharoṣṭhī. On the copper coins of Polyxen it looks like an ordinary *ka* with a short vertical prolonging the one on the right side of the letter above the joint with the horizontal line. This letter is found neither on the silver coinage of Polyxen or on any of Philoxen’s coinage.

Buddhist Sanskrit literature, but not so far in Gandharan epigraphs.

For art-historical reasons, the object itself excludes a date in the Azes era. 74, therefore, should be reckoned in the Kuṣāṇa system, yielding either *ca.* AD 201 or 301, depending on the century chosen. Prof. Tanabe will present reasons for favoring one over the other.

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